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United Nations Environment Programme

Report of the Governing Council

Eighth special session (29-31 March 2004)

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Report of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum
on the work of its eighth special session

Jeju, Republic of Korea, 29–31 March 2004

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I. Introduction

1. The eighth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was held at the International Conference Centre in Jeju, Republic of Korea, from 29 to 31 March 2004. It was convened in pursuance of paragraph 1 (g) of Governing Council decision 20/17 of 5 February 1999, entitled "Views of the Governing Council on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements"; paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements"; and paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, entitled "Pattern of conferences"; and in accordance with rules 5 and 6 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council. The Council/Forum adopted the present report at the 6th plenary meeting of the session, on 31 March 2004.

II. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

2. The eighth special session of the Governing Council of UNEP was opened at 10 a.m. on Monday, 29 March 2004. The Minister for the Environment of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Kwak Kyul-Ho, welcomed participants to the session. Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, also made welcoming remarks. A message from Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, was read out on his behalf by Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

3. Opening statements were also delivered by Mr. Goh Kun, Acting President of the Republic of Korea, and Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, Chair of the United Nations Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation.

4. In his welcoming statement, Mr. Kwak Kyul-Ho recalled the goals that had been set in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development with regard to water, sanitation and human settlements and stressed the importance of the current session in ensuring that they were effectively implemented. Although there would be obstacles along the way, starting the process was already half the work. In order to ensure the sustainable use and management of water resources, participants would have to exercise both wisdom and compassion. He also expressed appreciation to participants of the fifth Global Civil Society Forum for their valuable contribution to the preparation of the special session.

5. In his statement, Mr. Annan recognized that the current session was an opportunity to refocus much-needed attention on the United Nations' overarching agenda of poverty eradication. He noted that the issues on the Council's agenda would also be taken up at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The full text of his statement is set out as annex V to the present report.

6. Mr. Töpfer, in his statement, expressed appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Korea for their generous hospitality in hosting the eighth special session of the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum. He noted the record number of participants attending the session and described the island of Jeju as an uplifting environment for discussions on sustainable development. He further noted that, because we lived in times of turmoil and conflict, it was easy to lose sight of long-term objectives for improving the lives of billions of people across the globe who deserved and demanded better. Over the next three days, participants would have the opportunity to refocus attention on the foundations of sustainable development, the only true security policy for the future. In his view, the fifth Global Ministerial Environment Forum offered an invaluable mechanism for promoting dialogue among Governments for protecting the environmental base of sustainable development.

7. He recalled that, at the Malmö session in 2000, the Council/Forum had recognized the need to achieve sustainable development as a reality and challenged Governments to take stock of the progress

which they had made in attaining that goal. Governments had also committed themselves to achieving further time-bound goals and targets at the Millennium Assembly and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, but still needed to honour those commitments.

8. The current session was focused on a specific theme – the environmental dimension of water, sanitation and human settlements – which had profound implications for the successful achievement of many of the Millennium Development Goals. He therefore urged participants, as they debated that issue, not to forget the plight of the many people that were dying because they lacked access to clean water or adequate sanitation.

9. In his statement, Mr. Goh Kun acknowledged the role that UNEP had played over the past 30 years through its evaluations of the global environment and underlined, in particular, its keen interest and activities in matters relating to dust, sandstorms and marine pollution in north-east Asia.

10. Mr. Hashimoto reviewed environmental problems that his country – Japan – had experienced, pointing out that it was possible to correct such problems, as his country had done, but not necessarily without considerable financial cost and human suffering. He hoped that other countries could learn from his country's experiences rather than repeat them. Noting the continuity between the work to be done by the Council/Forum and that undertaken at previous and planned sessions of the World Water Forum, the Commission on Sustainable Development and other bodies, he stressed the importance of a clean environment to sustainable development and described water as a precious element and key to both. The time for action was at hand and the enormity of the crisis facing humanity called for selfless initiatives.

B. Attendance

11. The following States members of the Governing Council were represented at the session[1]: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Monaco, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

12. The following States not members of the Governing Council but Members of the United Nations or members of a specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were represented by observers: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chile, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Niue, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yemen.

[1] The membership of the Governing Council was determined by elections held at the 38th plenary meeting of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, held on 25 October 1999, the 29th plenary meeting of the fifty-sixth session, held on 22 October 2001, and the 59th plenary meeting of the fifty-eighth session, held on 10 November 2003.

13. The observers for the Holy See and the Palestinian Authority to the United Nations also participated.

14. The following United Nations bodies, Secretariat units and convention secretariats were represented: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, UN-Habitat, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and United Nations University (UNU).

15. The following specialized agencies were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and World Trade Organization (WTO).

16. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Commonwealth Secretariat, Council of the European Union, European Commission, European Environment Agency (EEA), Helsinki Commission, League of Arab States, International Organization of Francophonie, Organization of American States (OAS), Permanent Observer Mission of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee to the United Nations, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and World Conservation Union (IUCN).

17. In addition, representatives of non-governmental and private-sector organizations also attended as observers. The full list of participants is contained in document UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/8.

C. Election of the President

18. With the exception of the President, the officers elected by the Governing Council at its twenty-second regular session continued to serve in their respective capacities at the eighth special session, in accordance with rule 19 of the rules of procedure. Following re-assignment with his Government, Mr. Ruhakana Rugunda (Uganda) was unable to continue serving as President of the Governing Council. The Council accordingly elected Mr. Arcado Ntagazwa, Minister of State for the Environment in the Office of the Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as the new President by acclamation.

19. In farewell remarks to the Council, Mr. Rugunda expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve as President. He thanked the Council, the Bureau, the secretariat and the Executive Director for the excellent working relationship that he had enjoyed with them and voiced his confidence that, under his successor, the Council's contributions would be a great asset in the work to be undertaken at the forthcoming twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

20. Addressing the Council, the new President, Mr. Ntagazwa, stressed the importance of the agenda, noting that it would feed into the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and urged the Council to work in a focused manner.

21. Following Mr. Ntagazwa's election as President, the officers of the Council/Forum at the eighth special session were as follows:

President:	Mr. Arcado Ntagazwa (United Republic of Tanzania)
Vice-Presidents:	Mr. Carlos Gamba (Colombia) Ms. Tanya van Gool (Netherlands) Mr. Suk Jo Lee (Republic of Korea)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Petr Kopřiva (Czech Republic)

D. Credentials of representatives

22. In accordance with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure, the Bureau examined the credentials of representatives attending the session. The Bureau found the credentials in order and so reported to the Council/Forum, which approved the Bureau's report at the 6th plenary meeting, on 31 March 2004.

E. Adoption of the agenda

23. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Council/Forum adopted the following agenda for the session, on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/1/Rev.1) as revised prior to the meeting:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organization of the work of the session:
   (a) Adoption of the agenda;
   (b) Election of the President;
   (c) Organization of the work of the session.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment.
5. Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.
6. Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.
7. International environmental governance: implementation of decisions of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance.[2]
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report.
10. Closure of the session.

[2] UNEP/GCSS.VII/6, annex 1.

F. Organization of the work of the session

24. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Council/Forum considered the organization of the work of the session in the light of the recommendations contained in the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/1Add.1) and organization of work as agreed by the Bureau.

25. The Council/Forum agreed that plenary meetings during the current session would take the form of ministerial-level consultations, beginning with the 2nd meeting and continuing through the morning of Wednesday, 31 March 2004. The Council/Forum also agreed that, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 31 March 2004, it would hold its closing plenary meeting for the session.

26. The Council/Forum agreed that the plenary organized in the form of ministerial consultations would consider agenda item 6 (Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development). The Council also agreed that the plenary meetings in the form of the ministerial-level consultations should feature discussions on the theme: "Environmental dimensions of water, sanitation and human settlements", together with their cross-cutting issues, as agreed by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session for its multi-year programme of work for the period 2004–2005.

27. The Council/Forum also decided to establish a committee of the whole, under the chairmanship of Ms. Tanya van Gool (Netherlands), Vice-President of the Council, to consider agenda items 4 (Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment), 5 (Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum) and 7 (International environmental governance: implementation of decisions of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance).

28. It was further agreed that the Council/Forum would consider agenda items 3 (Credentials of representatives), 8 (Other matters), 9 (Adoption of the report) and 10 (Closure of the session) at the plenary meeting on the afternoon of Wednesday, 31 March 2004.

29. The Council/Forum also decided to establish an open-ended drafting group comprising a core of three members from each region under the chairmanship of Mr. Igede Ngurah Swajaya (Indonesia).

30. Following agreement on the organization of the work of the session, statements were delivered on the work of the session by the following invited speakers: Mr. Børge Brende, Minister of the Environment of Norway and Chair of the Commission on Sustainable Development; Mr. Amos Masondo, Executive Mayor of Johannesburg; Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-Habitat; Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Ms. Annik Dollacker, on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC); Ms. Camila Gidinho, on behalf of the Tunza Youth Advisory Council; and Mr. Choi Yul, of the Korean Federation for the Environmental Movement, on behalf of the Fifth Global Civil Society Forum, who delivered the views of the forum to the Council/Forum. Mr. Syed Hussain, High Commissioner for Pakistan, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, also made a statement.

31. Mr. Brende spoke of the time-bound targets set at the Johannesburg Summit and reviewed progress to date in meeting them. Although there had been some notable successes overall, it appeared that the world was moving slowly in its attempts to meet significant deadlines, despite the fact that the goals were specific, practical, realistic and achievable. To achieve them, it was necessary to ensure that integrated water resource management plans, based on an integrated and ecosystem approach, were in place by 2005; to sustain support for the measures already taken and those yet to be taken to halve the number of people without access to water; to correct the existing imbalance in the provision of water and sanitation services,

giving increased attention to the latter; to empower local governments to fund and deliver water and sanitation services in a rational manner; to recognize the fundamental challenge of rapid urbanization; to improve governance at all levels, from the local to the international; and, not least, to use much more efficiently the $15 billion spent each year in developing countries on the provision of water and sanitation.

32. Mr. Masondo spoke of the role of local authorities in facing the problems associated with water, sanitation and human settlements. He observed that, while the problems were global in scale, their impacts would be felt and their solutions implemented at the local level. This basic dynamic would only become more apparent over time, as the world became increasingly urbanized. To local governments, therefore, the objectives of good local governance and improved access to water, sanitation and housing were inextricably linked, and it was thus crucial to ensure the implementation of sustainable supply mechanisms, including sustainable financing, to resolve conflicts over water resources; to elaborate ways to manage demand for water; and to design and implement integrated water resource management plans. All this required a strong, decentralized local leadership and an informed, supportive citizenry, and it would therefore be necessary for national Governments to enter into alliances with their local counterparts.

33. Ms. Tibaijuka stated that the Millennium Development Goals were fundamentally geared to raising the majority of the world's people out of poverty, and suggested that water and sanitation provided an entry point for action to achieve that goal. In her view, nothing could constitute a more direct attack on poverty or a more direct step toward reducing child mortality, promoting universal primary education, gender equality and the empowerment of women and improving the lives of slum dwellers than to secure access to safe water and sanitation. The vital importance of water, sanitation and housing had been recognized in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with its emphasis on the five priority sectors of water, health, education, agriculture and biodiversity, and had also been operationalized by the Commission on Sustainable Development as a cluster in the follow-up to the implementation of the Plan of Implementation. She laid emphasis on the interrelated nature of the three areas of water, sanitation and shelter, the importance of locality and the link between all three and poverty: since water and sanitation could not be provided in a vacuum, people's shelter needs had to be addressed first. Similarly, the larger problem of poverty could not be solved without first meeting the challenges of providing water, sanitation and shelter. Those facts, she said, presented five key policy challenges: a need to focus on slums; a need to put in place effective monitoring mechanisms; a need to increase investment in water and sanitation, focused on the needs of the poorest; a need to establish realistic pricing policies, making water affordable for the poor and eliminating subsidies for the more affluent; and a need for the United Nations and other external support agencies to work closely with international financing institutions.

34. Mr. Kim Hak-Su expressed appreciation for the fact that the current session was being held in Asia and highlighted the challenges facing the region in the area of water, sanitation and human settlements, as well as ESCAP efforts to meet them. The tremendous recent economic growth in the region had come at the cost of significant environmental degradation. Indeed, 50 per cent of its forest base had disappeared, it had the largest area in the world affected by desertification, and had the fewest freshwater resources per capita in the world. Recognizing the importance of natural resources to development, ESCAP was making every effort to promote sustainable development through policy integration. It was working closely with UNEP, with which it was undertaking capacity-building in the region in the areas of climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and control of dust and sand storms. He also noted that the current session would constitute an important contribution to the work to be undertaken at the fifth ministerial conference on the environment and development in the Asia and Pacific region, which would take place in the Republic of Korea in March 2005.

35. Mr. Choi Yul presented the statement prepared by the Fifth Global Civil Society Forum at its meeting on 27 and 28 March 2004, which synthesized inputs from a series of regional meetings as refined by participants at the Fifth Global Forum. In its statement, the forum expressed concern at the slow pace of implementation of the various sustainable development goals set by the international community over the years and identified a number of global developments that had adversely affected the implementation of

policies and programmes on water, sanitation and human settlements. Enumerating the major challenges to that implementation, the forum reiterated the continued commitment of civil society to the goal of sustainable development, the achievement of universally agreed targets and time-frames and the implementation of water, sanitation and human settlements-related programmes. The full text of the statement issued by the Fifth Global Civil Society Forum is contained in information document UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/15.

36. Ms. Dollacker presented the business and industry sector statement to the Council/Forum. In her statement, she stressed that the business community – one of the major groups recognized in Agenda 21 – was an integral part of civil society and argued that fullest participation in the work of the United Nations would be fostered by an inclusive approach, rather than devising separate procedures for different non-State actors. With regard to the water agenda, she pointed out that the business sector contributed many solutions to the global water challenge and listed ways in which it could promote freshwater availability and protection. She stressed the need to involve all stakeholders in the management of water resources, including through public-private partnerships, and urged collaboration across all sectors in meeting the challenges of sustainable development. Similarly, technology cooperation and capacity-building in the area of water and sanitation were crucial to the attainment of sustainable development goals and, given the high costs involved in water technologies, called on Governments to promote enabling frameworks in both developed and developing countries to encourage the development and dissemination of such technologies. Finally, she noted that, while the recommendations of the Fifth Global Civil Society Forum generally reflected the consensus of the participating organizations, ICC was not able to endorse those recommendations in their entirety.

37. Ms. Gidhino presented the youth statement to the Council/Forum on urgent aspects of the issues of water, sanitation and human settlements. In their statement, young people stressed the need to accord due priority to water and sanitation; to make children and youth aware of the precious nature of water; to promote capacity-building and youth empowerment in that area; and to balance the competing uses of water resources between preserving ecosystems and meeting human needs. Among their recommendations to the Council, young people reiterated the need for investments of $350 billion over the next 10 years to meet the targets of the Millennium Development Goals on water and for legislative frameworks to monitor the activities of multinational companies and to ban the privatization of freshwater resources. With regard to human settlements, young people called on civil society and ministers to give due attention to the problem of unsustainable human settlements and recommended the development of secondary cities to assimilate an adequate share of population growth; the elaboration of resettlement programmes and national shelter strategies; and the promotion of regularization and upgrading of informal settlements.

38. Mr. Hussain stressed that poverty was inextricably linked to sustainable development and that access to clean water, sanitation and adequate shelter were inextricably linked to poverty, and he lamented the continuing decline in official development assistance, noting that it would result in a lack of access by developing countries to new technologies and capacity-building and consequently blunt efforts aimed at environmental protection. He therefore called for the completion of a strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building in time for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council. He expressed the support of the Group of 77 and China for the strengthening of UNEP, but noted that the question of universal membership was a complicated one on which there was no consensus, and highlighted the group's concern at the continuing imbalance in the geographical representation of the staff of UNEP.

G. Report of the Committee of the Whole

39. The Committee of the Whole held four meetings under the chairmanship of Ms. Tanya van Gool, Vice-President of the Council, from 29 to 31 March, to consider the agenda items assigned to it. The Council/Forum took note of the report of the Committee of the Whole at its 6th plenary meeting, on 31 March. The report is contained in annex III to the present report.

III. Adoption of decisions

40. At its 6th plenary meeting, on 31 March, the Council/Forum adopted the following four decisions on the basis of drafts approved and submitted by the Committee of the Whole, the texts of which are contained in annex I to the present report:

(a) Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance (decision SS.VIII/1);

(b) Small island developing States (decision SS.VIII/2);

(c) Regional annexes (decision SS.VIII/3);

(d) Waste management (decision SS.VIII/4).

41. Following the adoption of the decisions, the representative of Indonesia made an offer to host a meeting of the high-level intergovernmental working group of the Council/Forum with the mandate to prepare an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building as envisaged in decision SS.VIII/1.

IV. Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment (agenda item 4)

42. Agenda item 4, on assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment, was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex III to the present report.

V. Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (agenda item 5)

43. Agenda item 5, on outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex III to the present report.

VI. Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (agenda item 6)

44. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 29 March 2004, the Council/Forum began its consideration of agenda item 6 in the form of ministerial consultations on the theme of the environmental dimensions of water, sanitation and human settlements. The theme was addressed through three focus areas, namely: integrated ecosystem approaches by the year 2005; water and sanitation; and water, health and poverty.

45. The ministers discussed the first focus area at their 3rd meeting, on 29 March, the second at their 4th meeting, on 30 March, and the third at their 5th meeting, on 30 March. Mr. Monyane Moleleki (Lesotho) and Mr. Elliot Morley (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) served as moderators for the discussions on the first focus area, Mr. Francisco Huenchumilla (Chile) and Mr Miklos Persanyi (Hungary) served as moderators for the discussion on the second, and Mr. Arcado Ntagazwa

(United Republic of Tanzania) and Mr. Philippe Roch (Switzerland) were the moderators for the discussions on the third.

46. On the basis of the ministers' extensive consultations, the Chair prepared a summary of their deliberations, which he submitted for consideration by the Council/Forum. The ministers and other heads of delegation expressed their overall satisfaction with the summary, which is entitled the "Jeju Initiative" and attached as annex II to the present report, and there was widespread agreement on many of the points contained in it. It was agreed, however, that while the Jeju Initiative was a valuable recapitulation of the issues debated by the ministers and other heads of delegations during the eighth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, there was no consensus on a number of the issues included in the initiative and that they were still under active consideration by Governments. On that understanding, the ministers and other heads of delegations agreed that the text of the initiative should be transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development as the contribution of UNEP to the work of the Commission at its twelfth session, at which the Commission would review progress on the implementation of the goals, targets and commitments on freshwater, sanitation and human settlements in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit.

VII. International environmental governance: implementation of decisions of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance (agenda item 7)

47. Agenda item 7, on international environmental governance: implementation of decisions of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the report of the Open ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance, was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex III to the present report.

VIII. Other matters (agenda item 8)

48. Under this item, the Council/Forum agreed that, at its twenty-third session, in February 2005, the Governing Council should consider presenting a report on the outcomes of major intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, based on the report on that matter before the current session of the Council/Forum (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/3), to the United Nations General Assembly as a contribution of UNEP to the major event to be held by the General Assembly in 2005 on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. One representative noted that the General Assembly had not yet decided on the form that the major event would take and that the question was still being actively debated; he cautioned, therefore, that the Council/Forum should not be understood to have pre-judged the outcome of the General Assembly's deliberations.

49. Also under this item, the representative of Cuba expressed concerns about problems experienced by his country in attending environmental meetings, owing to travel restrictions imposed by other countries.

IX. Adoption of the report (agenda item 9)

50. The present report was adopted at the 6th plenary meeting of the session, on Wednesday, 31 March 2004, on the basis of the draft reports of the plenary and of the Committee of the Whole, contained in documents UNEP/GCSS.VIII/L.1 and UNEP/GCSS.VIII/CW/L.1, respectively, and on the understanding that the secretariat and the Rapporteur would be entrusted with its finalization.

X. Closure of the session (agenda item 10)

51. At the Council/Forum's 6th plenary meeting, on 31 March, the representative of Mauritius, speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, made a statement, asking that it be reflected in the report of the session. He outlined efforts that small island developing States were taking to present their position at the forthcoming review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was scheduled to take place in Mauritius from 30 August to 3 September 2004. While the special situation of small island developing States was widely recognized, that recognition had not been translated into action. The small island developing States were therefore in agreement that action was overdue, particularly in the areas of access to funding, technology appropriate to the special needs of small island developing States and capacity-building, as well as global warming, globalization, health and security. In the same vein, he endorsed the consensus view voiced the previous evening at a special event on small island developing States held in the margins of the current session that the forthcoming review of the Barbados programme of action should not be an occasion for renegotiating the programme, but rather for identifying the obstacles and gaps that had prevented its implementation; the outcome of the review should be a plan that was action-oriented, pragmatic and realistic, based on partnerships and featuring time-bound targets and clearly defined roles for all stakeholders. He also underlined the role which UNEP had played in recent years in implementing the Barbados programme of action and outlined proposals that had been made for its continued contribution to the efforts to ameliorate the difficulties facing small island developing States, including delivery of capacity-building and education; promoting type II partnerships; establishing a unit dedicated to issues of concern to small island developing States; and supporting regionally tailored programmes. In closing, he appealed to all member States to participate as fully as possible in the forthcoming review of the Barbados programme of action.

52. Following those remarks and the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the eighth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum closed at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, 31 March 2004.

Annex I

Decisions adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session

SS.VIII/1. Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance

The Governing Council,

Recalling its Ministerial Declaration[1] adopted in Malmö, Sweden, on 31 May 2000,

Recalling also its decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance adopted in Cartagena, Colombia, on 15 February 2002,

Recalling further the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[2] adopted in Johannesburg on 4 September 2002, which, among other things, emphasized that the international community should fully implement the outcomes of the decision on international environmental governance, as contained in decision SS.VII/1 of the Governing Council,

Recalling resolutions 57/251 of 20 December 2002 and 58/209 of 23 December 2003 of the General Assembly, as well as its own decision 22/17 I of 7 February 2003,

Emphasizing that all components of the recommendations on international environmental governance, as contained in decision SS.VII/1, should be fully implemented,

Having considered the reports of the Executive Director[3] on the issue,

I

Universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme

1. *Notes* the variety and divergence of views, at the present time, of Governments on the question of universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum contained in the note by the Executive Director,[4] and as further reflected at the current session;

2. *Takes note* of the issue paper on the question of universal membership contained in the note by the Executive Director;[5]

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to invite views on universal membership with a view to conveying the views expressed by Governments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations as an input for his report to the United Nations General Assembly, as invited by the General Assembly in its resolutions 57/251 of 20 December 2002 and 58/209 of 23 December 2003;

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1 Decision SS.VI/1, annex.

2 *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales N. E.03.II.A. 1 and corrigendum) chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

3 UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5 and Adds.1–4.

4 UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/6.

5 UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/11.

4. *Also requests* the Executive Director to present a report on this matter to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session;

II

Strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme

5. *Notes with appreciation* the consultative processes undertaken by the Executive Director to strengthen the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme in pursuance of decision 22/1 I A, especially broad and regionally balanced participation in the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation, and to ensure the legitimacy and relevance of processes related to environmental assessment and monitoring;

6. *Takes note* of the report of the Executive Director on the synthesis of responses on strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme;[6]

7. *Takes note also* of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the intergovernmental consultation on strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme;[7]

8. *Requests* the Executive Director to evaluate the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the intergovernmental consultation and to prepare a report for consideration by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session;

9. *Decides* to review the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the intergovernmental consultation at its twenty-third session;

10. *Invites* developed countries and developing countries in a position to do so and other partners active in the field of development to consider providing additional funding for implementing the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the intergovernmental consultation on strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular those related to participation by, capacity-building in and support to subglobal assessments in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

III

Intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building

11. *Welcomes* the submission of the report of the Executive Director on the elements for a draft intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building;[8]

12. *Underscores* the need to provide developing countries and countries with economies in transition with assistance in implementing their environmental goals, targets and objectives, in particular those set out in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the urgent need, for that purpose, to develop an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building as called for in decision SS.VII/1;

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6 UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5/Add.3.

7 UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5/Add.4, annex I.

8 UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5/Add.1.

13. *Decides* to establish a high-level open-ended intergovernmental working group of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum with the mandate to prepare an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building for its consideration at its twenty-third session;

14. *Requests* the Executive Director to convene meetings of the above-mentioned open-ended intergovernmental working group as may be required for it to fulfil its mandate in the most practical way, in Nairobi and other venues, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 34 of decision SS.VII/1;

15. *Also requests* the Executive Director to seek additional financial resources from Governments in a position to contribute to that process, in particular to facilitate the participation of developing-country representatives;

16. *Invites* Governments and relevant organizations and stakeholders that are active in the field of capacity-building and technology support, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Environment Facility, as specified in Governing Council decision SS.VII/1, other relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, as well as the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements in pursuance of the mandates given to them by the respective conferences of the parties, to contribute to the work of the open-ended intergovernmental working group;

17. *Decides* that the high-level working group shall start its work taking into consideration, among other things, the elements for a draft intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building set forth in the report of the Executive Director;[8]

18. *Invites* regional and subregional ministerial environmental forums to submit views on their needs for technology support and capacity-building to the high-level working group for its consideration;

19. *Requests* the Executive Director to make available relevant reports, including an inventory of existing capacity-building and technology support activities of the United Nations Environment Programme and of other relevant international organizations, to assist the high-level working group, as necessary, noting that the Environmental Management Group could play an active role in that regard;

IV

Strengthening the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme

20. *Takes note* of the reports by the Executive Director on strengthening the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme;[9]

21. *Notes* the pilot phase of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions and welcomes the significant broadening of the donor base and the increase in total contributions to the Environment Fund;

22. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue his efforts in seeking an increase in funding, from all sources, for strengthening the financial base of the United Nations Environment Programme and to implement decision SS.VII/1 with respect to the recommendations on financing of the Programme, including through resources approved for the United Nations Environment Programme by the General Assembly from the United Nations regular budget;

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[9] UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5, chapter III and UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/12.

23. *Decides* to review all aspects of the strengthening of the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme at its twenty-third session and requests the Executive Director to prepare a comprehensive report on the matter for its consideration;

V

Multilateral environmental agreements

24. *Takes note* of paragraphs 56–67 of the report of the Executive Director on the overview of progress on international environmental governance[10] and reaffirms paragraphs 26–30, as well as other relevant provisions of the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives on International Environmental Governance, adopted in decision SS.VII/1;

25. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to promote the implementation of the recommendations of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum with respect to coordination between and effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements, in pursuance of its decision SS.VII/1, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties to those conventions;

VI

Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system and the Environmental Management Group

26. *Welcomes* the operationalization of the secretariat of the Environmental Management Group;

27. *Notes* the work undertaken by the Environmental Management Group and its programme of work for the next two years;

28. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to promote coordination across the United Nations system on environmental activities, in particular those relevant to operations of the United Nations system, keeping in mind paragraphs 36 and 37 of decision SS.VII/1, through the work of the Environmental Management Group;

29. *Decides* to convey the report of the work of the Environmental Management Group[11] to the General Assembly for its consideration as an annex to the report of the eighth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum;

30. *Requests* the Executive Director to present a report on the matter to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session, which should also include a comprehensive assessment of the location of the secretariat of the Environmental Management Group, taking into account, among other things, existing efforts to strengthen the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme and the headquarters of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, as well as the mandate and membership of the Environmental Management Group.

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[10] UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5.

[11] UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5/Add.2.

SS.VIII/2. Small island developing States

The Governing Council,

Noting the preparatory process for the international meeting for a ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

Recalling its decision 22/13 on the international meeting for the ten-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

1. *Requests* the Executive Director to prepare a report on the outcome of the international meeting for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum;

2. *Decides* to review the report at its twenty-third session in the context of the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme.

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SS.VIII/3. Regional annexes

The Governing Council,

Recalling paragraph 31 of its decision 22/20, on the Environment Fund Budget: proposed biennial programme and support budget for 2004–2005, and paragraph 7 of its decision 22/21, on regional implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Having analysed and reviewed the secretariat's proposed format for the regional annexes,

Considering the importance of having a clear understanding of activities by the United Nations Environment Programme in the individual regions and how those activities respond to regional needs as expressed by ministerial processes,

Considering also the need to identify the percentage of resources that substantive divisions of the United Nations Environment Programme devote to regional activities,

1. *Reiterates its request* in paragraph 31 of decision 22/20 to the Executive Director to include in the programme of work beginning with the biennium 2006–2007 regional annexes identifying the percentage of the budget of the Environment Fund from each of the divisions that will be implemented at the regional level and to present this for a decision by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a synopsis by region of the area of work of each division and to present those synopses to the Governing Council at its regular sessions starting from the biennium 2006–2007, as a separate information document.

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SS.VIII/4. Waste management

The Governing Council,

Mindful that modes of production and consumption have various impacts on the environment,

Aware that human activities generate liquid, solid and gaseous wastes with a direct impact on water resources, human settlements and the environment in general,

Aware also that water and water-management-related issues are closely linked to the generation of wastes, both solid and liquid,

Mindful that improvement in water quality management depends on sound waste management through, among other measures, the treatment of wastewater and solid wastes,

1. *Decides* that the issues related to domestic, industrial and hazardous waste management, in particular regarding capacity-building and technology support, shall be discussed by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session;

2. *Decides* in that context to consider innovative ways of mobilizing financial resources from all appropriate sources to support the efforts of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in this area.

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Annex II

Jeju Initiative

President's summary of the ministerial segment of the eighth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

Jeju, Republic of Korea, 29–31 March 2004

I. Introduction

1. Ministers and other heads of delegations met from 29 to 31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea, for the eighth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Declaring unanimous appreciation for the kindness and hospitality of the Government of the Republic of Korea, and under the leadership of the President (United Republic of Tanzania) of the Governing Council and ministers from Chile, Hungary, Lesotho, Singapore, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the ministers and other heads of delegations engaged in three sessions of constructive and interactive dialogue on the priority environmental dimensions – and the subsequent requirements for concrete and coordinated action – of the following water-related themes and associated targets stemming from the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on Sustainable Development:

(a) *Ecosystem approaches, in particular in integrated water resource management*
Target: Develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005, with support to developing countries;

(b) *Water and sanitation*
Target: Halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and

(c) *Water, health and poverty*
Target: Halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than $1 a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

2. During their deliberations, the ministers and other heads of delegations raised a number of key environmental dimensions and concepts for addressing the functions and needs of the natural environment, particularly water, in local, national and international efforts to achieve the targets listed above. The ministers and other heads of delegations invited the Chair of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Executive Director of UNEP to present their views, in the form of the Jeju Initiative, to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its forthcoming twelfth session in April 2004 and other relevant international forums.

3. The present document, prepared by the Chair and moderators, is a summary of the rich and interactive discussion on the part of the ministers and other heads of delegations attending the meeting, rather than a consensus view on all points.

4. In a spirit of moving from rhetoric to action, the ministers and other heads of delegations also shared examples of partnerships and best practices relevant to each of the targets discussed, with a view to identifying practical measures and workable approaches based on actual experience. A list of two-page

summaries of those partnerships and practices set out under different categories, along with the names of the countries that provided the two-page summaries, is provided in the appendix to the present document. The ministers and other heads of delegations commended the efforts of the Governments and observed that the best practices presented, if replicated on a large scale in many countries, would make a substantive contribution to the realization of the targets listed above.

II. Key points of the ministerial discussion

5. The ministers and other heads of delegations stressed that integrated water resource management (IWRM) incorporating an ecosystem approach is a key building block for achieving the water, sanitation and human settlement targets to be discussed at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, for promoting economic growth and achieving targets on health and poverty reduction.

6. Recognizing an inseparable and indisputable link between the protection and sustainable use of the natural environment, especially water resources, and the provision of environmentally sound sanitation services, the improvement of human settlements, public health and poverty reduction, the ministers and other heads of delegations underscored the importance of, first, protecting every drop of fresh water and putting it to optimal use to overcome the global water challenge in a sustainable manner; second, turning every good idea into a best practice for widespread adoption and adaptation throughout the global community; and, third, mobilizing adequate financial resources for water and sanitation. In this context, the ministers and other heads of delegations underlined the following issues:

(a) The environmental dimensions identified in subsections 1 (b), 2 (b) and 3 (b) of section C below are fundamental to implementing the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on Sustainable Development targets, commitments and goals on water, sanitation and human settlements, giving due consideration to the different situations in countries and regions;

(b) There is a need for countries to assume, in cooperation with all relevant partners, full ownership of the achievement of the targets and to demonstrate a clear and firm political commitment thereto through, among other things, inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral cooperation, domestic budgetary allocations, legislative and policy frameworks and community support programmes;

(c) The current absence of environmental considerations in many poverty reduction strategy papers and national sustainable development strategies is in urgent need of attention. There is a need to reflect in national priorities, poverty reduction strategy papers and national sustainable development and sector plans the necessary actions, and associated domestic budgets, to address the national priorities of IWRM, following ecosystem-based approaches, including the sustainable provision of drinking water and effective sanitation and the environmentally sound disposal of wastewater;

(d) Water plays a vital role in the satisfaction of basic human needs, food security, poverty alleviation and the protection of ecosystems;

(e) There is an urgent need to ensure that countries are in a position to produce IWRM and water efficiency plans by 2005 – with active support by the international community in the form of capacity-building initiatives, technology transfer and international and creative financing – as a key interim step to achieving the 2015 water, sanitation and poverty reduction targets. Concern was expressed that, from a global perspective, progress was not as advanced as it should be;

(f) There is a need to engage and involve regional and local authorities, the private sector, civil society and local communities, especially women, indigenous people and youth, in addressing the environmental dimensions (see below) of the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on Sustainable Development targets, commitments and goals on water, sanitation and human settlements;

(g) The United Nations system, including UNEP, regional and other international organizations such as international financial institutions and regional development banks, in partnership with other

relevant actors, have a valuable contribution to make to international, regional and national efforts to address the needs listed here;

(h) Attention must be given to the continued vulnerability of small island developing States and the importance of the forthcoming ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

7. The ministers and other heads of delegations acknowledged that the ultimate responsibility for implementing best environmental practices lies with sovereign Governments. The environmental dimensions listed in the Jeju Initiative must be suitably adapted to the political, geographic, demographic, cultural and other requirements of each respective State and region, in line with its respective capacity.

A. Partnerships

8. Support and cooperation are needed to achieve the above, as are partnerships among major actors at the local, national, regional and global levels, particularly as they relate to the cross-cutting issues of capacity-building, technology transfer, financial assistance, education for sustainable development and sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

9. The ministers and other heads of delegations welcomed the partnerships presented during the discussions, some of which are reflected in the appendix to the present initiative. Partnerships, including those supported by official development assistance and other international finance, can leverage new and additional resources and build capacity.

10. The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities was highlighted as an existing intergovernmental partnership for addressing the environmental dimensions of the IWRM, water and sanitation targets. The ministers and other heads of delegations emphasized the need to further implement existing activities, plans and strategies such as the Global Programme of Action.

11. The 2005 water resource alliance initiative proposed by UNEP, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Global Water Partnership was discussed. The initiative will be launched at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York in April 2004.

B. Best practices

12. The ministers and other heads of delegations outlined many examples of best practices in the areas of water, sanitation, human settlements and poverty reduction. While these may need to be adapted to suit specific country or regional conditions, there are common approaches that, if applied widely, could make a considerable contribution to accelerating achievement of the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on Sustainable Development targets in a sustainable manner. As noted above, a list of two-page summaries of partnerships and best practices discussed by the ministers and other heads of delegations, with short descriptions, is set out in the appendix to the present initiative. A compilation of the two-page summaries themselves may be found in document UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/17, which will be circulated to all members of the Council/Forum and other participants with a covering note from the Executive Director.

13. The ministers and other heads of delegations welcomed the UNEP/World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/UN-Habitat/Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) "10 Keys for Municipal Wastewater Collection and Treatment", and recommended them as best practice principles suitable for wide application by local and national authorities, the private sector and relevant international organizations.

C. Elements of the ministerial discussion

14. The ministers and other heads of delegations repeatedly emphasized the interdependence of the three themes discussed over three sessions. The points raised below under the respective headings are not mutually exclusive; rather, their connectivity with and relevance to the other points is assumed.

1. Ecosystem approach and IWRM

(a) Need for substantive progress

15. The ministers and other heads of delegations emphasized the need for the international community and national Governments to make substantive progress towards implementing the IWRM target by 2005. They recognized that many countries have IWRM programmes in place or under development. They also recognized, however, that having fully fledged IWRM and water efficiency plans by 2005 might not be feasible for all countries, particularly for countries with limited capacity. They made clear that IWRM should be tailored to specific circumstances and that it was not appropriate to adopt a "one size fits all" approach. The implementation of IWRM plans is a long-term process. Progress in establishing or further developing the plans can be achieved by 2005 if the political will and necessary capacity are in place to deliver.

(b) Key environmental approaches, actions and dimensions underpinning IWRM

16. The ministers and other heads of delegations recognized the following approaches, actions and environmental dimensions underpinning IWRM:

(a) *Cross-sectoral management of water resources:* Demands on, and use of, water are at the centre of complex and often competing sectoral and social interests (between, for example, agriculture, industry, energy and domestic use, as well as between rural and urban areas). Cooperation is needed between all relevant sectors, especially between managers of water supply and managers of water quality;

(b) *National planning processes:* National sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction strategies (incorporating environmental sustainability) and other plans should give due priority to water, sanitation and human settlements, including in IWRM, to facilitate, among other things, effective resource allocation;

(c) *Transboundary approaches:* National actions can be strengthened and reinforced through regional cooperation among concerned countries, for example through shared river basin management and riparian agreements and, where relevant, international cooperation. Cooperation among riparian States in the management and sustainable use of shared rivers or groundwater aquifers can open the door to other forms of cross-border cooperation and regional stability;

(d) *Ecosystem-based approach:* In taking forward an integrated approach to water resource management, countries should factor the full range of up and downstream environmental impacts into policy-making. This includes the protection of ecosystems such as soils, forests, wetlands, lowlands and coastal zones, as well as flood and drought management, the concept of environmental flows and the impacts of climate change, natural disasters and alien invasive species;

(e) *Linking the principles and practice of IWRM with integrated coastal zone management:* Under the ecosystem approach to IWRM, coastal zones need to be considered an integral part of freshwater management. The concept of integrated coastal zone and river basin management should be promoted and scientific management and institutional links between freshwater and coastal-marine management should be facilitated, taking into consideration existing experience at the national and regional levels;

(f) *Institutional structures and governance:* Coherent and sustainable legal, regulatory and institutional arrangements are vital. Key elements are the development of national water law, a river basin focus, decentralization to the most appropriate level and the setting of appropriate targets and guidelines;

(g) *Economic instruments:* Water is a vital resource with an economic value and needs to be managed efficiently. Greater use of economic instruments such as fair water service pricing policies and incentive measures that promote the equitable and efficient use of water can help manage demand and generate new revenue to expand water and sanitation services to the poor;

(h) *Monitoring, assessment and reporting:* Effective IWRM depends on accurate and scientifically credible assessments of river basins, including ecosystems, and water resources, and a holistic view of pressures and impacts. Scenario analysis can be a useful tool in the planning process. Environmental impact assessment before, during and after development activities is crucial. A transparent system for monitoring and reporting should be put in place;

(i) *Stakeholder involvement:* Balancing demands requires active and transparent consultation and participation – including at the local level – of relevant stakeholders, particularly women and indigenous peoples, as well as other civil society groups, business and local and regional authorities. Trade-offs are frequently necessary and systems should be put in place to resolve disputes. Education and awareness-raising activities should be undertaken;

(j) *Capacity-building and training:* It is important to strengthen the capacity for IWRM, including legal, financial, assessment and technical expertise, particularly in developing countries, least developed countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States;

(k) *Sustainable technologies:* Alternative and cost-effective technologies such as rainwater harvesting and sustainable desalination should be explored and promoted, and the transfer of appropriate technology increased.

2. Water and sanitation

(a) Need for an environmentally sound approach to the sanitation target

17. Building on the points above concerning IWRM, the ministers and other heads of delegation stressed the value of adopting an environmentally sound approach to the World Summit on Sustainable Development target on sanitation. Such an approach would incorporate the demands and effects of sanitation services on water catchments, downstream countries and communities and coastal environments. Specifically, an ecosystem approach to sanitation incorporates all components of water management, including protection of the water source, water supply, wastewater collection, treatment, reuse and reallocation to the natural environment. The ministers and other heads of delegations observed that water supply and sanitation are what might be termed "development partners" and should not be addressed in isolation from each other.

(b) Key environmental approaches, actions and dimensions of the sanitation target

18. In the context of applying a holistic approach to sanitation, including wastewater collection, treatment, reuse and reallocation to the natural environment, the ministers and other heads of delegations encouraged national Governments and local communities, supported wherever possible by international organizations, including UNEP:

(a) To give greater attention to sanitation, its environmental dimensions and its health, economic and environmental impacts in their quests to move towards sustainable development;

(b) To include in the monitoring of the sanitation target parameters tailored to respective ecosystem characteristics that assess the environmental, health, economic and social impacts of the discharge and treatment of wastewater;

(c) To adopt a flexible approach to providing sanitation services and engage local communities, especially women, in identifying and applying community, culture and ecosystem-specific solutions to sanitation;

(d) To stimulate local demand for environmentally sustainable sanitation services through, among other methods, raising awareness of the economic, health and environmental impact and benefits of the provision of sustainable sanitation services;

(e) To underpin the use of appropriate wastewater treatment and reuse technology with legislative and economic frameworks that promote the protection of ecosystem services;

(f) To evaluate and apply alternative and community-appropriate technological and management solutions for the collection, treatment and reuse of wastewater, making a distinction between the approaches used in different ecosystems and those used in urban and rural settings;

(g) To pay greater attention to ecosanitation and the potential of ecotechnology as a tested, realistic and environmentally sound wastewater management system;

(h) To consider, as appropriate, water service pricing, taxes, levies, microfinance, market creation and alternative or supplementary forms of financing wastewater collection and treatment facilities, based on realistic assumptions regarding the community's capacity to pay for the installation, maintenance and operation of wastewater collection, treatment and redistribution systems;

(i) To develop appropriate and sustainable financial mechanisms, including, as appropriate, public-private partnerships and public-public partnerships, as well as the development of markets for the provision of sanitation services, with the appropriate involvement of financial institutions.

3. Water, poverty, health and human settlements

(a) Need to address water and sanitation issues in poverty reduction efforts

19. The ministers and other heads of delegations observed that a sustainable approach to poverty reduction, economic development and the improvement of public health necessitates the incorporation of environmental issues in poverty reduction strategy papers, national sustainable development strategies and other development programmes. They highlighted the cause-and-effect relationship between environment, good health and economic development.

(b) Key environmental requirements of the poverty reduction target

20. The ministers and other heads of delegations recognize that translating ecosystem approaches to water and sanitation management, including as it relates to health and poverty reduction, could include:

(a) Integrating environmental considerations into the activities of all areas of Government, especially housing, health, education, agriculture, energy, finance and industry, with a view to achieving common goals;

(b) Drawing attention to the fact that the returns on investments in the water and sanitation sectors are high and directly contribute to poverty reduction and stable economic development;

(c) Conducting appropriate scientific research on and assessing the impact of economic development on the natural environment, the crucial links between health, environment and poverty reduction and the availability of clean water sources;

(d) Encouraging and empowering local activities by decentralizing and delegating necessary planning, decision-making, funding, operation and accountability regarding water and sanitation management to local authorities, communities and users, including women;

(e) Enhancing national stakeholder consultation in policy-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and investing in education and human development;

(f) Incorporating community-led environmental targets, including the protection of ecosystems such as land, wetlands, forests, coastal zones and water supply sources, with realistic action plans and costing;

(g) Encouraging efficient use of cleaner production technologies and techniques;

(h) Granting a fairer and larger share of water management and economic development budgets to small-scale projects using practical and affordable technologies;

(i) Promoting security of tenure, property and water rights for the poor, especially in urban slums;

(j) Recognizing the fundamental and central role of women in water management, their right to land tenure, water and access to sanitation and the need for equitable participation by women in decision-making;

(k) Promoting entrepreneurship at the local level, facilitating new and alternative employment options through the provision of environmental services and providing social services such as education and family planning information.

D. Role of UNEP and other United Nations agencies

21. UNEP, working in partnership with other United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and other actors, has an important role to play in helping to expedite the implementation of the IWRM, water and sanitation targets, including through support for capacity-building on legal, financial, technical and other issues, education, scientific monitoring and assessment, and technology transfer activities at the national and regional levels, particularly in developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States. UNEP can assist countries in the integration of environmental sustainability issues, including water and sanitation, into national sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction strategies and other plans. The ability of UNEP to convene, including in facilitating cross-border dialogue with the full consent of involved countries, and its active participation in partnerships, should be strengthened.

22. UNEP was invited to identify methods, in close collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies, the Global Water Partnership and other partners and, upon request, to integrate environmentally sustainable approaches to water and sanitation in national water policies, sector plans, IWRM plans, poverty reduction strategy papers and sustainable development strategies. In this context, the ministers and other heads of delegations stressed the importance of strengthened interaction between UNEP and international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank. The ministers and other heads of delegations also underlined the need for UNEP to develop an action plan for this work with time limits,

benchmarks and targets, and to report back to the Governing Council on this work at its twenty-third session.

23. The ministers and other heads of delegations also invited UNEP to create a stronger link between water management and ecosystem stewardship by mapping ecosystems in different regions and identifying means for achieving better protection, in close consultation and concurrence with the countries involved.

24. The ministers and other heads of delegations called for the further development of guidelines on environmentally friendly sanitation based on best practices and taking into account differing circumstances, such as a rural, urban or megacities setting, and location, such as inland, by a river or by the sea. They invited UNEP, on request from developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States, to collaborate with appropriate national agencies in this work.

25. The ministers and other heads of delegations attached importance to the role which UNEP should play in providing environmental input to the 2005 review of the implementation of internationally agreed development and sustainable development goals and targets.

26. The ministers and other heads of delegations urged UNEP to ensure that environmental dimensions are introduced into poverty reduction strategies and in this regard to work closely with international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank.

27. The ministers and other heads of delegations urged UNEP to continue incorporating water, sanitation and human settlements issues in its post-conflict environmental assessment activities such as those in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, underlining that peace and cooperation constitute the most important precondition for sustainable development.

28. UNEP was urged to participate actively in relevant partnerships, including for example the European Union Water for Life initiative.

Appendix

Two-page summaries: Background papers for the ministerial-level consultations at the eighth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, 29–31 March 2004, Jeju, Republic of Korea*

Category:	Integrated water resources management
1. **Australia**:	Environmental Flows: The Living Murray Initiative
2. **Austria**:	Project "Lebende Flüsse – Living Rivers"
3. **Belgium**:	(a) Flemish region – Flemish Decree on Integrated Water Policy
	(b) Brussels region – Urban Management of Water in the Brussels Capital Region
	(c) Federal Government – Development Cooperation in Morocco
4. **Canada**:	(a) Science for Decision-Making: Measuring Progress on Policy Implementation
	(b) Canada's Sustainable Communities Initiative
	(c) Governance Models at the Watershed Level in Canada
5. **China**:	Water Pollution Prevention and Control – China's Policies and Successful Experiences
6. **Cuba**:	Talking Points: Cuba – Case Study
7. **Denmark**:	Management of Groundwater Resources in Denmark
8. **European Union**:	EU Water Initiative (EUWI)
9. **European Union**:	EU Water Framework Directive: Purpose and Implementation Process
10. **Finland**:	Step-wise Approach in Water Protection in Finland
11. **France**:	Fact sheet on SAGE
12. **Greece**:	Pinios Pilot River Basin Project
13. **Islamic Republic of Iran**:	Incentives for Industries
14. **Ireland**:	Grouping of Small Scale Private Water Supplies to Create Critical Mass for Programme of Investment to Improve Drinking Water Quality in Rural Ireland
15. **Italy**:	Italy's Experience in Planning the Water Sector: Framework Programme Agreement

* The summaries of innovative practices submitted by Governments (the "two-pagers") are contained in document UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/17.

16. **Japan**:	Summary of Innovative Practices in Japan
17. **Kenya**:	Rainwater Harvesting in Kenya
18. **Kenya and Nile basin countries**:	Nile Basin Initiative
19. **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya:**	Great Man-Made River
20 **Norway**:	Integrated Approach to Planning of Land Use
21. **Republic of Korea**	(a) Development and Implementation of Water Quality Management Measures For the Four Major Rivers
	(b) Comprehensive Measures on Water Saving
	(c) Support Initiative for Dam Surrounding Areas
	(d) Stream Environment Restoration Initiative
22. **Singapore**	Singapore's Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Programme
23. **Slovenia**	Sustainable Development of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas Region – Environmental aspects
24. **Spain, Portugal and Mexico**	Latin-American component of the EU Water Initiative
25. **Thailand**	Innovative practices in water, sanitation, human settlements and poverty eradication.
26. **United States of America**	(a) White Water to Blue Water - A partnership in the wider Caribbean to promote sound water and ecosystem management
	(b) FONAG: Quito's water fund - A municipal commitment to protect the water
	(c) Rapid Biological Assessment Protocols
	(d) National Estuary Program

Non-governmental organizations

27. **GRHO** (Kenya)	Rainwater Harvesting
28. **IRCSA** (Kenya)	Rainwater Harvesting

Category	**Water and sanitation**
1. **Austria**	Waste water projects in neighbouring countries such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which were co-financed by Austria
2. **Belgium**	(a) Brussels Region – Urban Management of Water in the Brussels Capital Region
	(b) Walloon Region – Price of Water
3. **Bosnia and Herzegovina**	Innovative practices pertaining to water-related environmental issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina

4. **Chile**	**Water resources**
5. **Côte d'Ivore**	Partenariat Secteur Public et Secteur Privé dans le Domaine de l'Approvisionnement en Eau et Assainissement, Cas de la Côte d'Ivoire
6. **Denmark**	(a) Innovative practices and important experience in Danish environmental cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe on water and sanitation
	(b) Innovative practices in planning and implementation of Danish support to water sector development – from project concepts to sector-wide approach: the case of Uganda
7. **Egypt**	Innovative approach to municipal wastewater management: the Egyptian experience
8. **Finland**	Step-wise Approach in Water Protection in Finland
9. **Ireland**	Development Cooperation Ireland support to the Government of South Africa Water Services Sector Support Programme "Masibambane"
10. **Israel**	Israel's Experience in the Management of Water and Wastewater
11. **Japan**	Summary of Innovative Practises in Japan
12. **Kenya**	Rainwater Harvesting: A Viable Option for Kenya
13. **Mauritius**	Reuse of Effluent for Irrigation and to safeguard Lagoon Water Quality in the Grand Bay Area
14. **Netherlands**	Innovative practices in the Drinking Water Supply in The Netherlands - Private Business, Public Owners
15. **Republic of Korea**	Securing Stable Financial Resources for Sewage Treatment Facilities
16. **Russian Federation**	Practice for Resource Management, Water supply and Sanitation in Russia
17. **Slovakia**	Water and Sanitation Focused on Sanitation
18. **Spain, Portugal and Mexico**	Latin-American component of the EU Water Initiative
19. **Sri Lanka**	Innovative practices for water and sanitation
20. **Sweden**	Innovative practices to enhance implementation of WSSD targets – Swedish initiative for ecological sanitation
21. **Thailand**	Innovative practices in water, sanitation, human settlements and poverty eradication.
22. **United States of America**	(a) Community Water and Sanitation Facility
	(b) USAID's Development Credit Authority
	(c) Safe Water System
	(d) State Revolving Funds
	(e) New York City's Watershed Management Program

Category	**Water, health and poverty**
1. **Japan**	Summary of Innovative Practices in Japan
2. **Thailand**	Innovative practices in water, sanitation, human settlements and poverty eradication
3. **United States of America**	Water for the Poor
Category	**General**
1. **Norway**	Integrated Approach to Planning of Land Use

Annex III

Report of the Committee of the Whole

I. Introduction

1. In pursuance of the decision of the Governing Council on the organization on the work of its session, adopted at the first plenary meeting of the session on 29 March 2004, the Committee of the Whole held four meetings under the chairmanship of Ms. Tanya van Gool (Netherlands), Vice-President of the Council/Forum, on 29, 30 and 31 March 2004, to consider agenda items 4 (Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment), 5 (Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum) and 7 (International environmental governance: implementation of decisions of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance), as allocated to it by the Council/Forum.

2. At its 1st meeting, on 29 March 2004, the Committee appointed Mr. Carlos Alberto Gamba Lopez (Colombia) Vice-Chair and Mr. Andrew Kiptoon (Kenya) Rapporteur for the session.

3. The chair proposed, and the Committee agreed, that the agenda items would be taken up in the following order: item 7, item 4 and item 5. During the deliberations in the Committee of the Whole, the secretariat introduced every item considered, after which representatives expressed their views thereon.

II. International environmental governance: implementation of decisions of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance (agenda item 7)

4. Agenda item 7 was taken up by the Committee at its 1st meeting, on 29 March 2004, and was introduced by the secretariat. In considering the item, the Committee had before it the following documentation: UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5, Adds.1– 4 and Add.1/Corr.1, providing an overview of progress on international environmental governance, elements for an intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building, the report on the work of the Environmental Management Group, a synthesis of responses on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP and the conclusions and recommendations of the intergovernmental consultation on that issue; UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/6, providing a synthesis of views of Governments on the issue of universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum; UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/8, containing a draft report analysing additional questions regarding strengthening the scientific base of UNEP posed by the UNEP secretariat, which was prepared under the auspices of the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) of the International Council for Science (ICSU); and UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/12, on the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. The Committee decided to take up the issues under the item en bloc.

5. During the general discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Australia, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Ireland, speaking on behalf of the 15 member States and 10 accession countries of the European Union, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Switzerland and the United States of America.

6. The representatives expressed their views on various aspects of international environmental governance and actions by UNEP in that regard in implementing Governing Council decision SS.VII/1. Many commended UNEP on its work in that area to date, while others stressed the need for full implementation of all aspects of the recommendations relating to international environmental governance, as set forth in decision SS.VII/1; others felt that excessive attention had been given to certain elements. A divergence of views was expressed by Governments on the issue of universal membership.

7. The representative of the secretariat responded to the questions raised and remarks made by representatives on the item. In particular, he agreed that there was need for a balanced approach to the implementation of the six components of the strategy for promoting international environmental governance and for enhanced coordination to promote greater synergies, avoid overlap and duplication and to ensure that member States received value for money. The secretariat also took note of the request for clarification of the role of non-United Nations actors invited to participate in the Environmental Management Group. With regard to the suggestion that the secretariat should list the benefits that would accrue from universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, he pointed out that the question of universal membership was ultimately for Governments to decide.

III. Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment (agenda item 4)

8. Agenda item 4 was taken up by the Committee at its 2nd meeting, on 30 March 2004, and was introduced by the secretariat. In considering the item, the Committee had before it the following documentation: UNEP/GCSS.VIII/2, providing the Executive Director's report on the state of the environment; UNEP/GCSS VIII/6, providing a progress report by the Executive Director on the implementation of Governing Council decisions as called for by the Governing Council at its twenty-second session; UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/2, transmitting the *Global Environment Outlook Yearbook 2003*; UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/3, summarizing progress in the implementation of a joint project to tackle the problem of dust and sandstorms in north-east Asia; and UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/9, providing information on the execution of the UNEP budget in the biennium 2002–2003.

9. The representative of the secretariat gave a brief overview of the progress made in the implementation of Governing Council decisions 22/1 II, 22/4 IV, 22/6, 22/13, 22/20 and 22/21 and summarily reviewed the state of the environment as it related to UNEP activities in environmental assessment and early warning, thematic assessments, assessing the environmental contribution to development and the state of the environment in the regions.

10. During the general discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Australia, China, Colombia, Cuba, India, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mongolia, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Sudan, Tonga, and United States of America. Many representatives commended UNEP on its work in the area, and urged further strengthening of that work. Some emphasized the need for further attention to regional or subregional issues such as sand storms and the marine and coastal environment.

11. The secretariat expressed appreciation for the many pledges of continued and intensified cooperation it had received from Governments and relevant intergovernmental organizations.

IV. Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council (agenda item 5)

12. Agenda item 5 was taken up by the Committee at its 2nd meeting, on 30 March 2004, and was introduced by the secretariat. In considering the item, the Committee had before it the following documentation: UNEP/GCSS.VIII/3, containing the Executive Director's report on the outcomes of major intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, and UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/7, containing information on issues arising from the resolutions of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session that were of significance to the work programme of UNEP. The representative of the secretariat further informed the Committee that two additional intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Council/Forum had been held since the preparation of the Executive Director's report on the issue, namely, the extraordinary Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, at which important decisions had been adopted on the issue of methyl bromide, and the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, a report on which was subsequently delivered to the Committee by the Executive Secretary of the Convention, who reviewed the many important outcomes of that meeting. The representative of the secretariat also briefed the Committee on preparations by UNEP for the forthcoming international meeting for a ten-year review of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held later in the year in Mauritius.

13. During the general discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Australia, Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, Ireland, speaking on behalf of the 15 member States and 10 acceding countries of the European Union, Japan, Nigeria, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the United States of America, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay. Representatives noted the effective work accomplished by UNEP in following up major intergovernmental meetings, including its support for the intergovernmental meeting for a ten year review of the Barbados Programme of Action.

14. The representative of the secretariat responded to the questions raised and remarks made by representatives on the item. In particular, he noted that UNEP would be contributing actively to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in 2005 in Kobe, Japan; took note of concerns expressed that overlaps between chemicals-related meetings and processes risked overburdening the stretched resources of developing countries; assured the Committee that UNEP fully supported a multi-stakeholder approach to chemicals management and that the Bahia Declaration process was deeply embedded in its work on chemicals, as demonstrated in its documentation on the matter; and confirmed that UNEP was closely cooperating with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and had stepped up its activities in the area of education.

V. Statements by organizations

15. The Committee heard statements by representatives of the following organizations during its deliberations on agenda items 4, 5 and 7: FAO, ESCAP, WMO, secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, WTO, Asian Development Bank, League of Arab States, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and International Council for Caring Communities. They highlighted their respective areas of competence, as well as their cooperation with UNEP, which they intended to strengthen further.

VI. Consideration of draft decisions

16. The Committee considered and approved draft decisions for transmission to the plenary on small island developing States; regional annexes; the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance; and waste management.

VII. Closure of the Committee of the Whole

17. The Chair of the Committee declared the work of the Committee of the Whole completed and its fourth and final meeting closed at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 31 March 2004.

Annex IV

Report of the work of the Environmental Management Group

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 58/209 of 23 December 2003, requested that a report on the work of the Environmental Management Group (EMG) should be made available to the General Assembly at its next session through the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

2. At its seventh special session, the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, by its decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002 on international environmental governance, adopted the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance containing the recommendations on the subject of strengthening international environmental governance. With regard to EMG, the report states that "for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to effectively play its policy role, it requires an instrument at the inter-agency level to enhance policy coordination across the environmental activities of the United Nations system. The Environmental Management Group is such an instrument and should be charged with reporting annually to the Forum, taking into account the provisions of General Assembly resolution 54/217 of 22 December 1999, as well as on specific issues arising from the work of the United Nations system in the environmental area on which the Forum could make recommendations on the work of the Environmental Management Group."

3. The present report provides a summary of the work undertaken by EMG until February 2004, with a focus on the group's activities since mid-2003, when its permanent secretariat was established in Geneva, Switzerland.

II. Background

4. EMG was established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the purpose of enhancing United Nations system-wide inter-agency coordination in the field of environment and human settlements. It is a central outcome of the endorsement by the General Assembly, in resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, of a comprehensive series of measures designed to enhance coherent action within the United Nations system in these areas, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report on environment and human settlements (A/53/463). By its resolution 54/217 of 22 December 1999, the General Assembly also supported the proposal of the Secretary-General concerning the establishment of an environmental management group.

5. The group's mandate was confirmed in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in paragraph 140 (b) of chapter XI, entitled "Institutional framework for sustainable development". This states that the international community should "strengthen collaboration within and between the United Nations system, international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility and the World Trade Organization", using, among other bodies, EMG.

III. Mandate and structure of EMG

6. EMG seeks to strengthen inter-agency cooperation through an issues-management and problem-solving approach. It aims to find solutions to important and emerging issues on the environment and human settlements agenda and to foster joint action.

7. The group's terms of reference, as contained in appendix I to the present report, were endorsed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in 1999, following a process of consultation carried out through the Committee's Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi. The terms of reference envisage EMG as a flexible mechanism, only meeting when required, to facilitate a timely approach to the tackling of emerging issues and to integrate knowledge available in the United Nations system. They also establish a two-tiered structure for the group: a senior-level decision-making body, the Environmental Management Group proper, chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP and comprising senior-level officials from member organizations of the Group, and time-bound ad hoc issue-management groups set up by EMG. These latter will cease to exist after completion of their tasks. The secretariat of EMG is provided by UNEP.

8. Members of EMG are the specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations system, including the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). EMG also establishes specific working relationships with non-governmental organizations, other civil society groups and the private sector on selected issues.

IV. Programme of work

9. Over the period between its establishment and the full functioning of its secretariat in 2003, EMG has held consultations on certain selected issues, such as the harmonization of biological diversity-related reporting, and contributed as well to the work of intergovernmental processes, such as the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance.

10. In pursuance of decision GCSS.VII/1 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, EMG became reinvigorated and fully operational in mid-2003, with the establishment of its permanent secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland.

11. EMG met several times to develop its new programme of work for the short and medium term. Taking into account recent developments in international cooperation, in particular the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other major conferences, such as the recent sessions of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the UN-Habitat Governing Council, at its meeting in July 2003 EMG considered how it could best contribute to the implementation of the sustainable development agenda in the areas of environment and human settlements.

12. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation – one of the major outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development – identifies a set of challenging issues facing the international community in its endeavour to achieve a sustainable future for people, countries and the planet Earth. Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting the natural resource base of economic and social development, support for Africa, means of implementation – all these areas require actions at all levels to reverse existing negative trends, with the hope of laying the foundations for a sustainable and prosperous future. Implementation is the key imperative.

13. To meet those challenges, the concerted efforts of all actors involved, including Governments, international organizations and many other stakeholders, are more necessary than ever before. The United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and agencies and other international institutions active in the field of sustainable development must join hands to contribute to implementation.

14. Against this background EMG agreed to focus its work on practical contributions to the implementation of this agenda. The group should become a forum in which all its members can share their views or concerns on issues of common interest, review progress or identify obstacles, develop policy options to address such issues, and convey their views and recommendations to intergovernmental forums, such as the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the UN-Habitat Governing Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development. In the spirit of the Johannesburg Summit, EMG intends to involve non-governmental organizations, the private sector, scientific organizations and other stakeholders in its work.

V. Activities

A. Contributions of EMG to major intergovernmental processes

1. Contribution to the process on international environmental governance

15. Against the backdrop of the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, at its twenty-first session, on 9 February 2001, the UNEP Governing Council adopted decision 21/21 on international environmental governance, which established an open-ended intergovernmental group of ministers or their representatives, mandated to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses as well as future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance. This group presented its report containing analysis and options to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its seventh special session in February 2002.

16. At its meetings in 2001, EMG discussed the continuing international environmental governance process, and members provided their comments and inputs on the proposals put forward during the process. Their contributions were incorporated in the relevant documents.

2. Contribution to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements

17. The sustainable management of water resources has been recognized as one of the biggest challenges facing the international community in achieving sustainable development. Water-related issues were not only one of the priority areas of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, they are also the focus of follow-up work in the Commission on Sustainable Development, in particular, at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions, and of the eighth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

18. The World Summit's Plan of Implementation, in paragraph 29 of its chapter IV, on protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, calls for the promotion of "effective coordination among the various international and intergovernmental bodies and processes working on water-related issues, both within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and international financial institutions".

19. Against this background, and in accordance with its overall approach, EMG decided to contribute to the deliberations of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session and the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth session, on water, sanitation and human settlements. At their meeting in September 2003, EMG members provided their views on specific environmental aspects of water, sanitation and human settlements. The outcomes of this discussion were incorporated in the background paper for the ministerial-level consultations contained in document UNEP/GCSS.VIII/4, with a view to helping focus the ministerial-level consultations at the eighth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on specific environmental

aspects of water, sanitation and human settlements, as well as on practical recommendations for implementation.

20. In addition, and with a view to strengthening the interagency aspects of the discussions, EMG solicited information on its members' activities in these areas and prepared an information paper on activities of the United Nations system that addressed environmental aspects of the water agenda, contained in document UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/5. EMG worked in close cooperation with UN Water, the inter-agency mechanism responsible for coordinating follow-up to the water-related decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goal relating to freshwater. Details of the results of this work are provided in appendix II to the present paper.

3. Intergovernmental consultation on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP

21. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of Governing Council decision 22/1 I A of 7 February 2003, on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, both intergovernmental and interagency consultations on this issue were held in Nairobi in January 2004. The recommendations of these consultations highlight, among other things, the necessity to promote cooperation and synergy between different intergovernmental organizations and, in particular, multilateral environmental agreements, as well as regional ministerial forums. The representatives attending the consultations also requested further exploration of the requirements for interactive mechanisms aimed at strengthening the interface between science and policy. Finally, they stressed the need for stronger cooperation between United Nations bodies, international financial institutions, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organizations, scientific and academic institutions, the private sector and think-tanks. Governments underlined the potential role of such mechanisms as EMG and the United Nations system-wide Earthwatch mechanism, in ensuring effective United Nations system cooperation and response to the identified needs and gaps in environmental assessment.

22. In view of the above, EMG is exploring its possible contribution to the intergovernmental consultation, such as assisting in facilitating further synergies and cooperation in environmental assessment and monitoring, including the preparation of the assessment landscape.

B. Work of EMG on selected issues

1. Issue management group on the harmonization of information management and reporting for biodiversity-related conventions

23. This issue management group, which was established in 2001 with UNEP as its lead agency, has continued its work and submitted a progress report to EMG at its session in February 2004. EMG approved the recommendations for follow-up activities contained in the report and requested a report on the implementation of those activities by its members in 2005. More details on the work of this issue management group may be found in appendix III to the present report.

2. Capacity-building

24. At its meeting in February 2004, EMG decided to take up the issue of capacity-building and development. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development highlights the importance of capacity-building in all areas of sustainable development and calls for better resourced, more effective, coordinated and complementary capacity-building activities in poverty alleviation and sustainable development programmes.

25. In view of the close involvement of the United Nations system and the international financial institutions in capacity-building activities, the issue of the efficiency and effectiveness of these activities and the potential for further synergies between actors within and outside the United Nations system has become increasingly relevant.

26. In the light of the above, and in view of the interest shown by some EMG members, the group's secretariat initiated a series of informal consultations with the aim of identifying specific needs and concerns of EMG members in the area of capacity-building which could be addressed within the framework of EMG. As a result of this first round of consultations, a note was prepared to initiate further discussions with all EMG members on potential activities to be undertaken in the framework of EMG during 2004.

27. EMG discussed several options for its work. These included the exchange of information on capacity-building activities and good practices related to the implementation of the seventh Millennium Development Goal and its targets to ensure environmental sustainability, as well as developing indicators and benchmarks to measure the success of such capacity-building activities.

28. The establishment of an environmental capacity-building resource library or clearing-house was regarded as a useful tool for gaining access to information and for sharing knowledge and experience in the United Nations system and beyond, and could eventually lead to the development of tool-kits by the members of EMG.

29. The development of model capacity-building programmes for specific areas, involving various multilateral environmental agreements and United Nations agencies, was another option suggested.

30. EMG decided to establish an issue management group on environmental capacity-building to discuss the issue further and to develop a specific and time-bound programme for the group's work in this area. This issue management group would consider the development of an environmental capacity-building resource library as its immediate focus.

31. The work by the issue management group could also provide an interagency input into work by UNEP to develop an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building, as mandated in Governing Council decision 22/17 of 7 February 2003.

VI. Planned activities

32. Where its programme of work over the next two years is concerned, EMG intends to take up a few more issues proposed by its members, such as changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and sustainable procurement. Further synergies and cooperation between EMG and the United Nations system-wide Earth Watch are also envisaged to enhance the work of the two bodies by sharing and exchanging data and information, so as further to catalyse environmental activities among all United Nations agencies for integrated assessment purposes. The two bodies could also contribute to the intergovernmental consultation on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP by ensuring a collective interagency response to needs and gaps identified by the consultation.

33. Up-to-date information on the activities of EMG may be found on its website: www.unemg.org.

VII. Links with intergovernmental forums and with other coordination mechanisms in the United Nations system

34. The recommendations in the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance, adopted in decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002, state in paragraph 37 that "the efficient functioning of the Environmental Management Group requires a clear relation with intergovernmental processes which includes a clearly defined reporting relationship with the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and other forums in the United Nations system."

35. In accordance with that decision, EMG will inform the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and the conferences of parties to multilateral environmental agreements about its work. Through the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the group will also report to the General Assembly.

36. While there is no formal relationship between EMG and other existing formal or informal interagency groups, the group will ensure that its work is consistent with the work of other relevant bodies, in particular the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the United Nations Development Group.

VIII. Functioning of the EMG secretariat

37. In paragraph 37, the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance states that adequate resources to support its functioning and the possibility of financial contributions for specific activities will be required to enable EMG to realize its full potential.

38. A small EMG secretariat, which is provided by UNEP, was established in International Environment House in Geneva and became fully operational by mid-2003. The Government of Switzerland provided a generous financial contribution for the secretariat's start-up phase. More resources are required, both to cover secretariat costs and to finance specific activities.

IX. Suggested action

39. In the light of the General Assembly's request, referred to in paragraph 1 above, that a report on the work of EMG should be made available to the Assembly at its next session through the Governing Council of UNEP, the Council may wish to transmit the report on the work of EGM to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

Appendix I

Terms of reference of the Environmental Management Group

Background

The General Assembly in its resolution 53/242, paragraph 5, supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an environmental management group for the purpose of enhancing United Nations system-wide inter-agency coordination related to specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements.

Mandate

Taking into account the views expressed by Member States on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements (A/53/463), and also taking into account the mandates of the relevant United Nations system organizations and bodies, as well as the views expressed by ACC (see ACC/1999/4) and IACSD at its thirteenth and fourteenth meetings, the Environmental Management Group is entrusted with the following responsibilities:

- To provide an effective, coordinated and flexible United Nations system response to and to facilitate joint action aimed at finding solutions to important and newly emerging specific issues of environmental and human settlements concern, through an issue management approach as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (A/51/950);
- To promote inter-linkages, encourage timely and relevant exchange of data and information on specific issues and compatibility of different approaches to finding solutions to those common problems, contribute to the synergy and complementarity among and between activities of its members in the fields of environment and human settlements, and hence act in a complementary manner and add value to the existing United Nations system-wide inter-agency cooperation.

Objectives

In fulfilling its mandate, the Group shall aim at attaining the following objectives:

To identify, address and resolve collectively specific problems, issues and tasks on the environmental and human settlements agenda requiring enhanced inter-agency cooperation in a given time-frame through securing effective and collaborative involvement of the relevant United Nations system agencies, programmes and organs and of other potential partners, as appropriate;

To provide a forum for an early discussion and sharing of information on emerging problems and issues in the field of environment and human settlements geared at finding collectively the most effective coordinated approach to the solution of the new tasks;

To assist UNEP and Habitat in carrying out their functions related to the promotion of coordinated approaches to environmental and human settlements issues in the United Nations system and to enhance the environmental and human settlement perspectives, in particular their normative and analytic aspects, in the work of other United Nations system organizations;

To facilitate, in this vein, the work of UNEP and Habitat in carrying out their responsibilities as IACSD task managers for a number of environment and human settlements-related chapters of Agenda 21 with a view to enhancing their contributions to the work of IACSD, its subcommittees and the task managers system and other related inter-agency mechanisms, as well as the Commission on Sustainable Development, as appropriate.

Membership

In line with the mandate and objectives of the Group set out above, making it an instrument to enhance further inter-agency cooperation and coordination across the United Nations system on specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements, members of the Group shall be the specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations system, including the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements.

Modus operandi

The Group will function in a results-driven, flexible and cost-effective manner, using modern telecommunication technologies whenever possible and appropriate. It will take into account work in progress under the aegis of the Ecosystem Conservation Group and utilize that Group, to the extent possible, to facilitate its own work on ecosystem management and conservation.

UNEP will be providing the secretariat for the Environmental Management Group.

The Group will have a two-tiered structure:

- A senior-level decision-making body, entitled the Environmental Management Group, chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP and consisting of senior-level officials from member organizations of the Group;
- Time-bound ad hoc issues-management groups set up by the Group. They will cease to exist after completion of their tasks.

The members of the Group will meet at least once a year on the invitation of its Chairman, after appropriate consultations. They will, in particular:

- Identify the specific issues to be addressed by the Group;
- Establish, as appropriate, an ad hoc issue management group for each specific issue identified;
- Decide on the mandate and time-frame of each ad hoc issue management group;
- Adopt the reports of the ad hoc issue management groups.

In cases where an issue is of an urgent nature and demands prompt action, the Chairman of the Group will immediately inform the members of the necessity to form an ad hoc issue management group and invite members to participate in the task. While all Group members have the right to accept or decline participation in any given ad hoc issue management group, any such group should benefit as much as possible from the participation of those organizations of the United Nations system which are most concerned with the issue at hand.

Each ad hoc issue management group is responsible to fulfil its mandate within the given time-frame. In case a group is not able to meet the deadline, it will submit a proposal on how and when to accomplish the task to the secretariat of the Group at least six weeks before expiration of the deadline. The Group will decide on the proposal.

UNEP will normally be the lead agency and chair the ad hoc issue management groups, the work of which will be organized and supported by the secretariat of the Group. However, an ad hoc issue management group may nominate by consensus a lead agency other than UNEP if this is found appropriate in light of the specific task. The lead agency will then prepare the documents, organize and chair the meetings, and prepare the report on the results of the group's deliberations.

Participation of non-members

Representatives of relevant sectors of the civil society and of international non-governmental organizations with a potential and specific expertise related to issues being deliberated by the Group may participate upon the request of Group members in meetings of the Group by invitation of the Chairman of the Group, taking due account of respective United Nations rules and procedures. They may also participate in the work of an ad hoc issue management group if required by the specific issue under discussion and so decided by the group. Accordingly, the lead agency of the ad hoc issue management group will invite the respective additional participants.

Reporting

The lead agency of each ad hoc issue management group will submit the report on the results of the group's work to the Chairman of the Group through its secretariat.

The secretariat in turn will submit copies of the report for comments and adoption to the representatives of those organizations-members of the Group who have participated in the respective work. In order to enhance efficiency the deadline for comments should not exceed four weeks. Immediately after the report has been adopted, the secretariat will distribute copies of the report for information to Group members.

When appropriate and in the case of an ad hoc issue management group having been chaired by an organization other than UNEP, after having consulted this lead agency, the Chairman of the Group may bring the report to the attention of the Secretary-General.

In the event that the results of the meetings of the Group and/or its ad hoc group's work have a bearing on United Nations system work in sustainable development, the Chairman of the Group will inform ACC and the secretariat of the Group will communicate the relevant report to the secretariat of IACSD.

Appendix II

Contribution of EMG to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements

Addressing environmental aspects of the water agenda: Activities of the United Nations system (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/5)

1. The present information paper was submitted as a contribution by the Environmental Management Group (EMG) to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session and the to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth session. It surveys major programmes and activities across the United Nations system relating to environmental aspects of water, giving details of the partners involved, their objectives and their outputs. The activities were analysed and grouped into three policy areas, namely: first, the application of ecosystem approaches in integrated water resource management; second, environmental dimensions of sanitation; and, third, water, health and poverty. While the survey shows the extent of inter-agency cooperation already taking place, the paper concludes by calling for more concerted programming of activities within the United Nations system, which also needs to be underpinned by more concerted action on the part of donors, and by identifying some emerging topics on the water agenda to which the United Nations system might respond with further joint action.

2. The main recommendations for further action are as set out below:

(a) *Recommendation 1: Strengthening ecosystem approaches in integrated water resource management*

Ecosystem approaches in integrated water resource management may be strengthened by:

- Enabling the allocation of water to environmental flow requirements, especially in so-called "closed" river basins where existing allocations have already exhausted or exceeded available supplies of freshwater;
- Using ecosystem approaches in urban storm water and urban catchment management, in order to increase urban biological diversity;
- Applying ecosystem approaches in irrigated agricultural systems, by linking aquaculture with agriculture and making use of the principles of integrated pest management; and in rainfed agricultural systems, by designing rainwater harvesting systems to increase biological diversity, and promoting the sensitive management and cultivation of seasonal wetlands;
- Promoting awareness of the virtual water trade: water-scarce countries can make substantial water savings by decreasing their exports of virtual water, while importing virtual water, via water-intensive crops and products;
- Producing better statistics and more accurate estimates of the true values of freshwater resources, their productivity, the level of livelihoods dependency, and the extent of use.

(b) *Recommendation 2: Strengthening the environmental dimensions of sanitation within the United Nations system*

The environmental dimensions of sanitation within the United Nations system may be strengthened by:

- Intensifying efforts to ensure wastewater reuse in a range of urban and industrial uses, in addition to its use in agricultural irrigation and aquaculture;
- Giving more urgent attention to the implementation of ecological sanitation and the future of waterborne sewerage systems, in rapidly urbanizing developing countries;
- Examining the viability of establishing zero-effluent discharge targets both for human settlements and for industries;
- Tackling the issue of endocrine-disrupting chemicals, which are not removed by conventional wastewater treatment.

(c) *Recommendation 3: Strengthening water, health and poverty approaches within the United Nations system*

Water, health and poverty approaches within the United Nations system may be strengthened by:

- Targeting more resources towards hazard identification and flood risk management, as a proportion of those dedicated to emergency assistance;
- Addressing risk management for low-level disasters in poor communities;
- Integrating work on water supply and sanitation in a participatory approach to the upgrading of informal settlements, rather than as isolated projects implemented from without;
- Mainstreaming water, poverty and environment indicators into processes already under way, such as poverty reduction strategy papers, in order to underpin effective water governance and management, to harmonize sectoral programming and to measure progress.

Appendix III

Issue management group on the harmonization of information management and reporting for biological diversity-related conventions

1. At its first meeting, in January 2001, EMG discussed the issue of the harmonization of national reporting and agreed to establish an issue management group dealing with this issue. UNEP was invited to serve as task manager, focusing on biological diversity-related conventions while considering the relevance of biological diversity-related aspects of other multilateral environmental agreements. The issue management group was asked to look at this issue comprehensively, taking into account issues such as the best use of lessons learned, the composition of the group and the number of the countries to be used in a pilot phase.

2. Over the ensuing years, a number of actions were taken to implement the mandate given to the issue management group, and EMG discussed several progress reports. Among those activities were bilateral meetings on harmonization issues between UNEP as the task manager and the secretariats of all the global biological diversity-related conventions, several regional agreements, and some international programmes. Four national harmonization pilot projects coordinated by UNEP have continued in Ghana, Indonesia, Panama and the Seychelles, and have now all delivered results. It is expected that a draft report on those pilot projects will be available in February 2004 for initial review by those participating in them. It is hoped that a workshop will be convened later in the year to review the experiences gained and proposed follow-up.

3. Over this same period , there have been significant changes in the international agenda as it relates to biological diversity and reporting, and the issue of reporting has been considered further in advisory and governance meetings held by the multilateral environmental agreements.

4. At the EMG meeting in February 2004, UNEP as the task manager of the issue management group submitted the following broad recommendations, based on the activities and developments described above:

(a) *Secretariat liaison meetings:* Regular liaison meetings between those responsible for reporting and information management matters within the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements should be reestablished to help, among other things, in promoting harmonization in reporting; in the analysis, synthesis and use of reports; in associated information management and use; and in the sharing of information among secretariats;

(b) *Collaborative task forces and workshops:* Appropriate use of task forces and workshops on reporting and information management issues of relevance to a range of international conventions and programmes will help ensure that key issues are tackled in a synergistic manner. Issues to be tackled in this manner might include, for example, nomination and reporting formats and processes for site-based treaties, or harmonized taxonomies for international conventions and programmes with species annexes and appendices;

(c) *National level approaches:* Testing harmonization approaches at the national level and sharing the results in the form of lessons learned, assessments of the value of different approaches and guidelines to help others in developing more integrated approaches will help to build national mechanisms that can respond more effectively to the need for information to be used in a more effective manner to support implementation and reporting on a range of international agreements and programmes;

(d) *Direct support to nations in reporting:* It has been suggested in various forums that some streamlining of the reporting agenda and improved access to information that will support reporting (including reporting formats, previous reports and any relevant handbooks and guidelines) will help countries in responding to reporting requirements. This might include advice on information management to support implementation and reporting processes;

(e) *Information dissemination:* Mechanisms should be developed and promoted to ensure the more efficient sharing of information and experience in harmonization. This could be in the form of improvements in the existing web site and its wider promotion and use, wide dissemination of the synoptic report, and the holding of workshops and seminars at relevant international forums;

(f) *Future approaches:* While there is currently a reluctance to consider use of this approach, various international forums and national pilot projects have shown an interest in the potential of what might be termed "virtual reporting", and this should be investigated further. This would mean that a country would place information on a national web site that would then constitute its report (or part of its report) to an international agreement on a particular issue Such a study would be purely exploratory at this stage.

5. EMG decided to recommend to all its members that they contribute to the implementation of these recommendations and to report to EMG on their activities undertaken in this area in 2005.

Annex V

Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session

It gives me great pleasure to send my greetings to all the environment ministers gathered on the beautiful and diverse island of Jeju. The Government and people of the Republic of Korea warrant our thanks for hosting this event, especially in this unique environment.

This year's Global Ministerial Environment Forum is an opportunity to refocus much-needed attention on the United Nation's overarching agenda of poverty eradication and its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Issues of water, sanitation and human settlements, which you will be discussing at this forum and which are also the main focus of next month's session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, occupy a key position in that agenda.

Millions of people all over the world face water shortages, and water-related problems are likely only to increase in the future. The search for solutions must not come at the expense of already threatened ecosystems. We must involve all stakeholders, urban and rural, public and private. We must reach out to new partners, and involve traditional partners in new ways. One such example is the Water for Asian Cities project, announced one year ago between UN-Habitat and the Asian Development Bank, which is meant to benefit some 700 to 800 million people in the region's urban areas. But projects need not necessarily be of such a large scale to have an impact. Smaller, community-based initiatives can be just as successful. In that regard, I encourage you to listen to what the Global Civil Society Forum, which took place this past weekend, had to say on these issues.

I am pleased that you will also be considering the further development of the international environmental governance process, finalized two years ago in Cartagena and endorsed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In that connection, I look forward to learning of your views on the pending question of universal membership of the Governing Council.

I also note that considerable progress has been made on strengthening the scientific base of the UNEP, and on an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building, both integral parts of the governance issue. When fully articulated, I am sure that this plan can enable UNEP to better assist developing countries in their efforts to implement the environmental goals and objectives set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

As the world's environmental policy-makers, your discussions can enrich and contribute to the broad review of these issues at the intergovernmental level, while at the same having an impact at home in your countries, where change is needed most. In that spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful session.

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